

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

**1-4. (canceled).**

**5. (currently amended):** A method ~~of therapy~~ for treating a herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus, ~~comprising—characterized by~~ directly administering ~~an active ingredient comprising matrix metalloproteinase-7 (MMP-7)~~ to the affected site of the herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus, with the proviso that matrix metalloproteinase-3 (MMP-3) also is not directly administered to said affected site.

**6-8. (canceled).**

**9. (new):** A method for treating a herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus, consisting essentially of administering MMP-7 to the affected site of the herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus.

**10. (new):** A method for treating a herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus, consisting of administering MMP-7 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier to the affected site of the herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus.